


# *Ignatius Loyola*



## **THE SOLDIER SAINT**

BY

***REV. GERALD TREACY, S.J.***



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# SAINT IGNATIUS LOYOLA

## *The Soldier Saint*

By REV. GERALD C. TREACY, S.J.

### **The Soldier in Action**

A CANNON shot marks the turning point in the career of Ignatius Loyola. It smashed his right leg and injured the left. This occurred at the siege of Pamplona, May 20, 1521, during the wars between the French and the Spaniards. In the course of the campaign the French had crossed the Pyrenees and Pamplona was under orders to hold off the invaders at any cost. But the French penetrated into the city. Only a small Spanish force held the citadel. Ignatius Loyola was with this detachment as captain of artillery. A council of war was called and the senior officers were for surrender. Loyola was for fighting as the only way of halting the invaders. Better be killed, he said, than accept the humiliating terms of the enemy. His advice was followed and the small garrison put up a brave fight until the French cannon made a breach in the walls. At the head of his troops Loyola fell wounded, and Pamplona surrendered.

### **The Soldier in Defeat**

Two weeks later Ignatius was sent in a litter to his family castle at Azpeitia, fifty miles from Pamplona. On his arrival home it was found necessary to reset his broken leg.<sup>1</sup> "So they began the butchery and in all those operations he never spoke a word nor showed any sign of pain except by clenching his fists hard." An instrument was continuously applied to prevent the shortening of the leg. This kept the sufferer in bed and he asked for a book. What he wanted was a romance of chivalry. The castle of Loyola had no such book, so he was given the *Life of Christ* and the *Lives*

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<sup>1</sup> All quotations are Loyola's own words found in his autobiography



*of the Saints.* After a little reading the soldier was surprised to find his interest grow.

### **The Battle of the Books**

When he laid aside these books he did not always think of what he had read but sometimes of the worldly things about which he used to think before. . . . However our Lady helped him bringing it about that to these thoughts there succeeded others which came from what he had read. . . . And he thought he might do what St. Thomas did or what St. Dominic did. . . . And this succession of different thoughts continued many days. . . . There was however this difference. When he was dwelling on the worldly day dream he found much pleasure, but when he ceased to think about it he found himself arid and discontented. But when he imagined himself going bare-foot to Jerusalem and doing all the other penances which he saw the saints had done, he was contented and joyful not only in such thoughts but even after he had ceased to think on them. . . . He realized that after one sort of thoughts he remained sad and after the others joyful, so little by little coming to know the diversity of spirits that moved him, he concluded that one kind came from God, and the other from the devil. This was his first reasoning about the things of God.

### **A Life Retrospect**

Up to this time, "at twenty-six years of age he had been a man given up to the vanities of the world and his chief delight was in martial exercises with a great and vain desire to gain honor." He had seen service under two Spanish grandees. In his military career there are two incidents that indicate the fiber of his manhood. When the city of Najera revolted against its Duke, Ignatius Loyola was a member of the army sent against it. The city fell and the troops were given a free hand at plunder. It was considered just punishment for citizens guilty of rebellion. But Ignatius refused to share in the plunder. It was unworthy of a knight. He was serving for honor not for money. Again in his last fight at Pamplona when he was wounded and a prisoner his enemies treated him kindly

and gave him his freedom without ransom. Ignatius responded to the kindness shown him by giving to his captors all his personal equipment, helmet, sword and shield.

### **Early Ambitions**

Looking back now on his past life he found he had been swayed by two great ambitions, love and war. The lady of his choice "was no ordinary woman, neither was she countess or duchess but of a much higher station than either of these." His quest was high. And in war he was the same, not an ordinary soldier doing his day's duty but always the knight and leader of men. His fellow-officers credited him with a generous disposition. They said of him that he never harbored a grudge after a quarrel. When he retired from the service, the Duke of Najera put down on his military record that he was generous and conciliatory and a born leader of men.

### **A Soul Victory**

His convalescence proved to be a bigger battle than the fight on the ramparts of Pamplona. The physical pain was bad but the soul-struggle was worse. His reading helped him a good deal and he concluded his first step must be penance for his past life. He determined to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem as soon as he could walk. Lying awake one night he had a vision of our Lady with the Divine Child.

In which sight he had for a considerable time very great comfort, and it left him with such loathing for all his past life, especially for his sensual indulgence, that he seemed to be freed from all evil pictures which had before been in his soul. And so for that hour, 1521, until August, 1555, when this is written, he never again felt the least assenting to any lustful impulse. . . . He persevered in his reading and his good intentions and whenever he talked to those of the household he spent the whole time on things of God by which he might do good to their souls. And taking much pleasure in those books



the thought came to him of setting down briefly the things most essential in the life of Christ and the saints. So he set himself to write a book with great diligence for he was now able to move about the house, putting the words of Christ in red ink, those of our Lady in blue, and the paper was glazed and ruled, and the letters were well-formed because he was a very good writer. Part of this time he spent in writing and part in prayer. And the greatest consolation he had was in looking at the heavens and the stars, which he did very often for a long time, because when he did that he felt in himself a very great power to serve our Lord.

### **First Pilgrimage**

Ignatius Loyola was now well enough to walk. He limped but not badly. Some of his biographers have said that his wound disqualified him for further military service. This is not true for in a very short time he began a pilgrimage during which he walked long distances. He disqualified himself for further soldiering for he had visioned a bigger battle than any known to the armies of Spain. He would begin it with a pilgrimage. To his brother, Lord of Loyola, he said: "The Duke of Najera is well aware that I am recovered. It would be well for me to go to Navarette where the Duke is staying." His brother provided him with a mule and Ignatius rode to Navarette where he put in his claim for back pay. The Duke of Najera paid him promptly and offered him a commission with his troops because of his good military record. He declined the commission and started off on his mule for Montserrat. There was a statue of our Lady at Montserrat in the Benedictine monastery which tradition said had been carved by St. Luke and brought to Spain by St. Peter. It was a popular place of pilgrimage.

An incident in his journey to Montserrat he recounts in these words:

### **Our Lady and the Moor**

Going on his way he overtook a Moorish cavalier on a mule and the two falling into conversation began to talk of our

Lady. The Moor said that he believed that the Virgin had conceived superhumanly but he could not believe she had remained a virgin after the birth of Christ; which opinion Ignatius could not shake in spite of the many reasons he gave. . . . The Moor rode on and was lost to view. . . . Then it seemed to him that he had done wrong in consenting that a Moor should say such things about our Lady and that he was bound to defend her honor. So the desire came to him to go seek the Moor and kill him for what he had said. And he had a long struggle over this desire which left him in doubt about what he should do. So without being able to decide he determined to let his mount go with free rein to the point where the roads divided. And if the mule took the road to the town he would seek out the Moor and give him the dagger, and if the mule did not go into the city but took the King's Highway he would let him be. And doing this it pleased God that though the town stood little more than thirty or forty yards from the Highway and the road to it was very wide and good, the mule took the King's Highway and not the road to the town.

### **A Knight's Vigil**

As Loyola drew near to Montserrat he kept thinking of the deeds he would do for the love of God. "And his mind was filled with ideas from Amadis of Gaul and other books of chivalry. So he made up his mind to watch over his arms all one night, now standing, now kneeling before the altar of our Lady of Montserrat. Here he decided to leave his arms and clothe himself with the armor of Christ. . . . Arrived at Montserrat after praying he made a general confession in writing which lasted three days." He gave his clothes away to a beggar, hung up his sword and dagger near the altar of our Lady, and in his pilgrim garb held all night vigil in the silence of the church. This was on the eve of the Annunciation, March 24, 1552.

The next day he started out for a town called Manresa. He took lodging in a hospital and begged alms each day. He fasted rigorously, eating no meat and



drinking no wine except on Sunday. As a soldier of the King of Spain he had been very proud of his appearance. Now he let his hair and finger nails grow, "because he had been very nice in the care of them." Every day he heard High Mass and vespers and compline chanted in the church at Manresa. At times he was tempted to give up his new mode of life but he fought the temptation and persevered. For the first time he experienced consolation and desolation in prayer. He was attacked by scruples. He was not satisfied with his general confession. He imagined he had forgotten to confess some sins so he sought the advice of confessors. One told him to write down everything he could recollect. He obeyed but his scruples kept on annoying him, till they developed into a very agony of soul. Speaking of this experience he says:

### **The Torture of Scruples**

At that time he lived in a room in the Dominican convent and kept up his daily seven hours of prayer on his knees, rising always at midnight and all other exercises of the soul but in all these he found no cure for his scruples, and many months passed in torments. And once when he was in great desolation because of them he prayed saying, "Help me, O Lord, for I find no help in man; though if I thought I could find help no work would seem too great for me. Show me Lord where to find help because even though it should be necessary to follow a little dog in order that he might lead me to the remedy I would do it."

### **A Prayer for Help**

During this experience he was tempted to commit suicide by hurling himself into an opening in the floor of his room close to the spot where he prayed. He prayed and fought this temptation. Then he remembered that one of the saints to rid himself of scruples had kept a strict fast. So for an entire week Ignatius tasted neither food nor drink, at the same time keep-



ing up his long prayers and vigils. When his confessor heard this he forbade Ignatius to continue his fast. Ignatius obeyed and his scruples soon ceased. He attributed his release to the goodness of God, "holding it for certain that our Lord had freed him by His mercy." In after years he wrote his "Rules for Scruples" in *The Spiritual Exercises*.

At this time too he experienced many divine favors "In those days God was treating him like a boy in school, teaching him because of his ignorance." Extraordinary graces were given him. He gained supernatural knowledge of the Faith.

### **Temptation and Prayer**

Once he went to a church which stood a little more than a mile from Manresa which was called St. Paul, and the road nearby runs next to the river. And walking and praying he sat down for a while with his face toward the river. And thus sitting the eyes of his understanding began to open and without seeing any vision he understood many things of the Faith and things in the realm of letters and that with a brightness of illustration so great that they seemed to him entirely new things. And the details of what he then understood cannot be explained though they were many. All that can be said is that he received a clearness of understanding of such a kind that in all the reasoning of his life up to the age of more than sixty-two years, putting together all the help he had received from God and all he has known, it did not seem to him that he had gained as much from all these advantages as from that single illumination when he sat by the river. That left him with an understanding so enlightened that it seemed to him he was another man and that he had an intellect different from the one he had before.

### **Light From Heaven**

There was a cave at Manresa where he frequently went to pray. There he wrote *The Spiritual Exercises* and was guided in his work by Mary and her Divine Child. Manresa had been his battleground. He came there knowing little of God and of his own soul. He

fought sin, temptation, scruples. He studied the *Life of Christ* in the silence of Manresa's cave. He was eager now to follow that Life and to show men how to follow it. He must find a way. He asked himself: "What will I do for Christ?" He determined he would first make a pilgrimage to the land hallowed by the earthly presence of his Lord and King.

### **The Battle at Manresa**

Ignatius Loyola began his pilgrimage in the beginning of 1523. Leaving Manresa, his first objective was Barcelona. Some friends wished to accompany him but he determined to pilgrimage alone. "Because he desired to cling to three virtues, charity, faith and hope, and if he had a companion . . . he would put trust and love in him and he wished to put all his trust and love in God alone. And he desired to embark not only alone but without provisions." He spent about twenty days in Barcelona and sailing from there he reached Gaeta in five days and nights. Disembarking he started to walk to Rome, where he arrived on Palm Sunday. Having received the blessing of the Pope, Adrian the Sixth, he began his journey to Venice on foot, a distance of three hundred and seventy-five miles. He had begged some money in Rome but by the time he reached Venice his pockets were almost empty as he had given generously to the poor as he met them on his journey. To do otherwise he considered would prove a lack of confidence in God.

### **A Pilgrim's Journey**

During all that journey to Venice on account of the guards against the plague he slept in doorways and porticos. . . . Once when he was all alone just at dusk in a great plain, Christ appeared to him in a way He was accustomed to appear and comforted him much. . . . When he arrived at Venice the guards came to examine the passengers one by one but they stopped before they came to him.



## **Finding a Friend**

He begged his food at Venice as he had done at Barcelona, and at night he slept in the Square of St. Mark. He made no attempt to collect money for his passage for he felt in his soul that God would show him a way of reaching Jerusalem. One day on the streets of Venice he met an old friend from Spain who invited him to his house. He remained with his friend until it was sailing time.

## **Beggar and Wayfarer**

The pilgrim was accustomed since he was at Manresa when he dined with people never to talk much but to listen to what was said and so find some topic which gave him an opening to speak of God. And when dinner was finished he did this. And that was why the good man with all his family became so much attached to him that they wanted him to stay with them. His host took him to the Doge, who gave orders to give him free passage on the Government ship for Cyprus.

Ignatius was attacked by fever just as the ship was about to sail and he took ship contrary to medical advice, trusting in the goodness of God.

## **Dangers at Sea**

In that ship were committed certain obscene and filthy deeds which he reproved with severity. The Spanish pilgrims advised him against this because the sailors were talking about abandoning him on an island. But it pleased our Lord that they arrived quickly at Cyprus. . . . During all this time our Lord appeared to him very often which gave him great consolation and strength.

## **In the Holy Land**

From Cyprus he went to Jaffa and there all the pilgrims began their journey to Jerusalem on donkeys. They dismounted as soon as they saw the Friars coming out of the city to meet them. It was the last day of August, 1523, when he saw the Holy Land for the



first time. He had left Manresa in January. The Franciscans were in charge of the Holy Places and he asked them if he might stay. They objected because their community was too poor to support him. He told them he would ask nothing from the house except that sometimes "they would hear his confessions. But they would not allow him to stay and the Franciscan Provincial warned him to resist further was to disobey the wishes of the Pope. For the Pope gave to the Franciscan superior the right to decide who should remain and who should leave.

### **On Mount Olivet**

And when this was settled there came to him a great desire to go back and visit the Mount of Olives before he left since it was the will of our Lord that he should not remain in the Holy Land. On the Mount of Olives there is a stone from which our Lord went up to heaven, and one can see now the footprints left on the stone. And that was what he wanted to go back and see. And so without saying anything or taking a guide he cleverly got rid of the others and went alone to the Mount of Olives. As the guards would not let him go in, he gave them a little knife from his writing case. And after praying at the Mount of Olives with much consolation there came to him the desire to go to Bethpage. When he arrived there he remembered he had not examined well on the Mount of Olives on which side the imprint of the right foot was and on which side the left foot, and going back he gave his scissors to the guards to let him go in. When they discovered in the monastery that he had left without a guide the Friars hastened to find him. And as he was coming down the Mount of Olives he met a Christian convert who worked in the monastery. He with every sign of great anger made motions as if he were about to beat him with a big stick, and coming up grabbed him by the arm. Ignatius went along quietly, and as he walked beside the Christian convert he received from our Lord great consolation for it seemed that he saw Christ all the way in the air above him. And that lasted until he arrived at the monastery.

## **Storm and Shipwreck**

All the pilgrims left next day for Cyprus. There were three ships ready to sail, a Venetian ship, a Turkish vessel, and a small boat on which Ignatius secured passage. The three ships left

with a fair wind in the morning and ran into a big storm at evening, which scattered the ships, and the big ship was lost near Cyprus and only the people saved, the Turkish ship foundered with all on board. The little ship had a hard struggle but finally reached a harbor in Apulia. That was in the midst of winter, very cold and snowy, and the pilgrim had no other clothes but breeches of coarse cloth down to the knee, leaving his legs bare, and shoes and a jacket of black cloth much torn at the shoulders and a short cloak of cloth worn very thin.

## **Arrival at Venice**

He arrived at Venice in the middle of January, 1524, having been at sea after leaving Cyprus all the months of November and December and half of January.

At Venice he was received by friends who gave him shelter and alms.

Now that he was convinced that it was God's will that he was not to labor in the Holy Land, he made up his mind to study some time "in order to be able to help souls." He left Venice for Genoa and found the land through which he traveled filled with French and Spanish troops. Loyola was arrested by patrols of both armies in turn but released after examination. From Genoa he sailed for Barcelona and his pilgrimage ended there.

## **The Return to the School**

At Barcelona he had a friend, Isabel Roser, who had often helped him with alms. He went to her and said that he wanted to get an education for he could not win souls without it. She promised to give him enough alms to live on. Another friend, Ines Pascual,



offered him a room in her house, and her brother, Canon Antonio Pujol, gave him the use of his library. He found a teacher who would teach him gratis. For two years he studied grammar with the little boys in school. "But one thing was a great hindrance to his progress. Whenever he commenced to memorize as it is necessary to do in the beginning of the study of grammar, there came to him new understanding of spiritual things and new delight in them. So he could not commit anything to memory nor drive away these importunate thoughts." In a little while he realized this was a temptation of the devil so he went to his teacher and explained the reason he was making little progress with his books, promising him to be diligent in his attention to studies for two years if he could find "bread and water enough in Barcelona to sustain life." His temptations ceased after he made this promise.

### **The Inquisition at Alcala**

At the end of two years he was pronounced fit to begin the study of the liberal arts so he entered the University of Alcala, in the year 1526. While at Alcala "he gave spiritual exercises and explained the Christian doctrine and from this he gathered much fruit for God. And there were many persons who grew in the understanding of spiritual things and in a liking for them. . . . These things aroused notice in the city especially because of the large assemblies which gathered whenever he wished to explain doctrine." The Inquisition at Toledo grew interested and Loyola was summoned for examination. At this time he had associated with him three companions in his work of street preaching. The Inquisition pronounced Ignatius blameless in his life and doctrine, and allowed him and his companions to continue their work, forbidding them however to dress alike as they were not members of a monastic Order. They obeyed the decree but about four months later Ignatius suddenly found him-



self under arrest. His imprisonment was not severe and he was allowed visitors. A friend offered him counsel to plead his case but Loyola refused, saying: "He for love of whom I came here will take me out if it seems best to Him." After a little more than a month he was discharged and he and his companions were forbidden to talk about the "things of the Faith for three years, when they should have studied more. . . . This sentence left him in doubt as to what he should do, because it seemed they had closed the door for helping souls, and that without giving him any reason except that he had not studied."

### **A Prisoner at Salamanca**

As Alcala was hostile to his manner of life Loyola transferred to the University of Salamanca. Here again he ran into the Inquisition. He and one of his companions were invited to the Dominican convent and the subprior told them he was anxious to hear about their work among the people. "What had they studied?" Ignatius told him they had not studied much. "Well then what do you preach?" asked their host. "We do not preach, we talk familiarly about the things of God, for instance at dinner with people who invite us," answered Loyola. "But about what things do you talk, that is what I want to know," queried the subprior. "We talk now of one virtue, now of another, praising them, and now of one vice and then of another, blaming them," was the reply. "You are not educated men," rejoined the Friar, "and yet you talk of virtues and vices, but nobody can talk on this subject except in one of two ways, either by education or by the Holy Spirit. You do not talk by education, therefore you do it by the Holy Spirit and we want to know what you get from the Holy Spirit." "I will not say more than I have said," rejoined Ignatius, "except before my superiors who have the right to demand it of me." "Then you stay here," was the an-

swer, "and we'll make you talk about everything." After three days at the monastery they were remanded to jail, and Loyola records: "They chained us both with one chain, each by a foot, and the chain was fastened to a post in the middle of the house. All that night we kept vigil." The next day when it became known that they were in prison friends came to them with food and bedding.

### **Trial and Sentence**

A judge came to examine them and Loyola gave him the manuscript of *The Spiritual Exercises*. After four days he was called to trial and examined by four judges. He refused the aid of counsel. They questioned him not only about his little book that was causing such big discussion but they examined him in theology and canon law. His answers were satisfactory so they ordered him to explain the First Commandment as he was accustomed to do in his talks to people. Then his judges took up a matter that was discussed in *The Spiritual Exercises*, namely when a bad thought was a venial sin and when a mortal sin. "How can you decide that," he was asked, "since you are not a trained theologian?" "Make up your minds whether it is true or not, and if it is not true condemn it," he replied. His answers were satisfactory but he was sent back to jail to await the judgment.

After about three weeks he was called for sentence. The court found no error in his doctrine, no evil in his life. He and his companions were allowed to continue teaching doctrine and talking about the things of God. But they must not attempt to define at any time what was a mortal sin and what a venial sin, until they had finished their university studies. Loyola submitted to the decision but added that it closed his lips so he could not assist his neighbor. On his release "he began to put himself in the hands of God and to think what he ought to do. And he concluded it was



very difficult to stay in Salamanca because it seemed that the door to helping souls was closed to him by that order forbidding him to distinguish between a mortal and a venial sin. So he made up his mind to go to Paris."

### **Arrival at Paris**

Leaving Salamanca he started to walk to Barcelona, driving a donkey before him on whose back he packed his books. At Barcelona his friends tried to prevail on him to abandon his plan of walking to Paris because France was at war, but he paid no heed to their advice, and within a month was at the French capital. He entered the University of Paris, at that time consisting of forty-nine colleges. The first college he went to was called Montaigu, the second and last Sainte Barbe. He attended lectures and lived outside the campus. As he was not satisfied with the two years study at Barcelona, feeling that he lacked a good foundation in Latin, he began the study of the humanities again. Lectures at the University began at five in the morning and ended at eight in the evening. In his free time Loyola begged—for he needed money—but he soon found begging was a hindrance to his studies, so on the advice of a friend he went to Flanders and to England where some wealthy Spaniards gave him generous alms. After that he did not have to beg.

### **The Paris Inquisition**

During his first year at Paris Ignatius went on an errand of mercy to Rôuen, a journey of twenty-eight leagues, barefoot and fasting, to help a sick friend. This friend was a compatriot who had stolen Loyola's money, and was returning from France to Spain when he fell sick at Rôuen. When Ignatius got back to Paris he found trouble awaiting him. Three Spanish students whom Ignatius had interested in his plan for helping souls decided to give up university residence



and go begging for the love of God. Their action was deeply resented by their fellow-countrymen and Ignatius was blamed for it. He was denounced by the group to the Inquisition. As soon as he heard this he immediately presented himself before the Inquisitor, asked for a hearing and was declared blameless in the case.

### **Conflict at the University**

He now began to seek recruits for his great enterprise of helping souls. As yet he had no very definite plan about this enterprise, but he made a very practical beginning with the student body. By giving his *Spiritual Exercises* to several students he gained their interest in spiritual things, and he soon had a big number going to Holy Communion on Feast days. This did not please the University authorities for there was a falling-off in attendance at the University disputations which always took place on Feast days. Ignatius was reprimanded and threatened with a flogging if he did not cease his spiritual work among the students. He kept on his work however and the flogging never took place though the stage was all set for it.

### **Master of Arts**

Loyola spent seven years at the University of Paris, passed his examinations as a licentiate and master of arts but did not complete his theology. Twelve years had gone since the day that the ex-soldier at the age of thirty-three had started to study grammar among the small boys at Barcelona. In later life he declared that it was his belief that no one had ever studied against greater handicaps. He enumerated poverty, poor health, lack of human ambition and natural dislike for study. "He studied twelve years only because he thought it would fit him for God's service."

## The First Recruits

While at the Spanish universities Ignatius Loyola tried to gather around him companions who would be willing to give their lives in the service of God. In this he failed, for none of his Spanish University comrades continued with him. But at Paris he succeeded. The first recruit he won at Paris was Peter Lefevre, who was his roommate at the college of Sainte Barbe. He was a Savoyard, very gentle and very loyal, at one time a victim of scruples, cured by Ignatius and after his cure put through *The Spiritual Exercises*. Another roommate was Francis Xavier, a Basque, a clever student and a good athlete: the best jumper at the University. His ambition was for Church honors. Ignatius swung his ambition into other channels, starting him to think one day with a simple question: "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul?" James Laínez was another companion, the intellectual giant of the group. Very soon after meeting Lainez at Paris, Ignatius gave him *The Spiritual Exercises* and won him to his cause. Lainez had a friend, Alphonsus Salmeron, an able Latin and Greek scholar. He too joined the Ignatian enterprise. Nicolas Bobadilla and Simon Rodriquez completed the group.

## The Call to Action

In July, 1534, Ignatius called them all together and told them he was resolved to bind himself to the service of God by the vows of poverty, chastity and service in Palestine. His idea was to convert the infidel. Would they follow him? All agreed but they could not go at once as some of them had not finished their university course. So they decided they would wait a year and if then there was no immediate prospect of sailing from Venice to the Holy Land, they would go to Rome and offer themselves to the Pope for service in any part of the world. On the feast of the Assump-



tion, 1534, after having gone through *The Spiritual Exercises*, they went to the little chapel of Notre Dame de Montmartre and made their vows to the above effect. Lefevre, the only priest among them, said Mass, the others received Holy Communion. On the same date, August 15, 1535 and 1536, the Companions renewed their vows at Montmartre, but Ignatius was absent on these two occasions.

### **The Return to Spain**

For in the early part of 1535 he became ill. His followers prevailed upon him to seek his native air and as this was the advice of his doctors too, he followed it. "He let himself be persuaded by the comrades, because, in addition to other reasons, those who were Spaniards had business to be attended to at home in which he could be useful. The agreement was that when he was well he would go and attend to their affairs in Spain, and after that travel to Venice, there to await them. So he mounted a little horse the comrades had bought for him and started off for home alone." As he was about to leave Paris he heard that he had been accused of heresy. Without delay he appeared before the Inquisitor and demanded trial. The Inquisitor told him that the charge was not serious enough for a trial but he asked him for the manuscript of *The Spiritual Exercises*. Loyola gave it to him and then brought a notary to record the fact that the charge had been dismissed without trial.

### **The Spanish Apostolate**

He had not been home in fourteen years. Nothing unusual marked his homeward journey until he reached the border of Guipuzcoa. There he was met by two armed men, retainers of his brother who had come out to act as an escort. As he came nearer his family castle some priests met him and told him they would accompany him to the home of his brother. He



declined their offer and went instead to the Poor House. Each day he did hospital service and taught Christian doctrine to children, besides preaching the Word of God. His brother opposed his preaching, assuring him that he would not find an audience. Ignatius replied that one hearer would be enough. The result was that great numbers came to hear him speak of the things of God, his brother among the numbers. In the three months he spent at home Loyola succeeded in stopping gambling among his fellow-townsmen. He had the custom of ringing the church bells for prayer introduced, "in order that all the people might pray as done in Rome." He introduced a Poor Law based on a plan that he had witnessed in the Netherlands. Under this law ordinary begging or giving alms to beggars was forbidden under pain of imprisonment. Officers were appointed who took up collections for the poor on Sundays and feast days and made a just distribution among the city's poor.

### **The Reunion of the Companions**

On the recovery of his health Ignatius Loyola left his native city and went about the business he had promised to attend to for his Spanish confrères. When this was finished he went to Valencia, then to Bologna, and from Bologna he walked to Venice toward the end of December, 1535. He begged his food during this journey. At Venice he resumed his study of theology, remaining there for eighteen months. Frequently he gave *The Spiritual Exercises*. In January, 1537, his Companions joined him, having walked all the way from Paris, taking a roundabout route through Germany and Switzerland as France and Spain were at war again.

His description of the reunion of the Companions is:

There arrived here from Paris my nine friends in the Lord, all master of arts and well versed in theology. They entered

here into two hospitals to serve the sick poor in the humblest, most repugnant services.

### **At the Papal Court**

After they had gone through this exercise for two months they went to Rome to keep Holy Week there. As they were in poverty and had nothing to back them they put their trust and hope solely in God for Whom they went. They found without trouble much more than they had sought; that is to say they had an audience with the Pope and many cardinals and bishops talked with them. The Pope gave them his blessing and permission to go to Jerusalem. Then he gave them sixty ducats in alms, and from cardinals and other persons they received one hundred and fifty ducats more, so that they brought to Venice in bills of exchange two hundred and sixty ducats. To those who were priests the Pope gave power to hear confessions and absolve, to those who were not priests he gave letters empowering any bishop to ordain them. When they got back here we took all the orders, including the priesthood, and we took a vow of perpetual poverty to the Legate of the Pope at Venice. The Legate gave us complete authority to preach, interpret the Scriptures and teach publicly and privately in all Venetian territory, together with power to hear confessions and absolve. . . . I have explained all this to show our great blameworthiness if we do not help ourselves after God has so much helped us. For without our knowledge or asking it seems that all the means to carry out our designs come to our hands.

### **The Apostolate at Venice**

While at Venice Ignatius was again denounced to the Inquisition. He wasted no time in appearing before the Inquisitors. He demanded a hearing. Sentence was given October 13, 1537. It declared that after hearing Ignatius and weighing all charges brought against him his judges "find these charges frivolous, vain and false, and they impose silence on all who would repeat them. Father Ignatius has been and is a priest of good and religious life, of holy doctrine, and of the highest character and reputation who up to now



has taught doctrine and given a good example in Venice."

The Companions had a year to wait before deciding against going to the Holy Land. If war ceased by that time they would go. They spent the year of waiting by working for the good of the neighbor. Separating into twos and threes they preached in various cities of the territory of Venice, assembling their hearers in the streets or addressing them from the pulpits of the churches. At the end of the year they met in Rome. It was impossible to take ship for Jerusalem. The journey to Rome was made by Ignatius with Lainez as his companion. During this journey Loyola had a vision which Lainez recounts:

### **The Vision and the Promise**

When we were going along the road to Rome our Father had many spiritual experiences especially in relation to the Eucharist. Lefevre and I said Mass every day and Ignatius went to Communion. Then he said to me that it seemed to him that God impressed on his heart these words, "I will be favorable to you at Rome." And Ignatius not knowing what these words might mean said: "I do not know what will become of us at Rome, perhaps we shall be crucified." Then another time he said that he seemed to see Christ with the Cross on His shoulder and the Eternal Father nearby who said, "I wish you to take this man for your servant." So Jesus took him and said, "I will that thou shouldst serve Me." And gaining great comfort from that vision and great devotion to the Name of Jesus he wished his Order called *The Company of Jesus*.

### **The Poor Pilgrim Priests**

As soon as all the Companions were assembled at Rome, they rented a house near the center of the city. The poor pilgrim priests they called themselves, for they promised not to accept compensation for their services. Their irregular source of income consisted of gifts from friends, a great deal of it from cardinals who believed in their work. They put all they re-



ceived into a common fund, and Peter Codacio, a Lombard priest who had just joined their ranks, managed all money affairs. He had rare business sense as practical as he was spiritual. For ten years he was procurator of the Company. The collection of alms was left to him while the others gave themselves to spiritual works for the neighbor. To him is due the credit of securing the house and the church which became the headquarters of the Company.

### **Financial Problems**

Loyola never gave financial difficulties much thought. "Even in the days of our most extreme need," one of his Companions wrote, "he would never refuse to accept anyone who seemed fit for the Company and called by God to it." When their new house was building and creditors appeared to claim the furniture Ignatius remarked: "Well, if they take the beds we will sleep on the ground. We are paupers and we can lead the life of paupers." It was then that a gift of two hundred gold pieces came unexpectedly, saving the day and the furniture. When their procurator died one of the Company asked Loyola where they would find a successor, "for he made money cares so completely his own that no one of us knows anything about them. The answer of Ignatius was to receive ten novices at once.

### **The Roman Inquisition**

At Rome Ignatius Loyola came to grips for the last time with the Inquisition. He called the experience:

The rudest persecution that we have ever met in our entire life. . . . Popular rumors had made us suspected and odious to many people. . . . We finally called our secret detractors before the magistrates. When one of our detractors found himself in court the others began to be afraid. They were wealthy, all well known in church circles, intimate with cardinals and

others of position, so they gave us a great deal of trouble. The chief among them being forced to appear declared that he could find no fault with our life or doctrine. The Governor wished to let the matter drop but we demanded some written statement in order to stop the scandal among the people. We could not get it. Finally I went alone to the Pope's summer castle and talked with His Holiness for an hour. I told him plainly all the times charges had been brought against me in Spain and how I had been arrested in Alcala and Salamanca. I did this so no one could tell him more than I did. I begged His Holiness to order a formal hearing. This was done and sentence given in our favor.

### **Servants of the Poor**

The winter of 1539 was a bitter one in Rome, and long lines of unemployed filled the city. Ignatius and the Companions took up relief work, brought the hungry and sick off the streets and lodged them under their own roof, sometimes as many as three hundred in one night. The effect of their work was to rouse the civil authorities to a sense of their responsibilities. Hospitals and Poor Houses were brought into service, and three thousand were taken care of each night while the distress lasted. The Companions went out begging for the poor and served them in their homes so that at times they had nothing left in their common fund. The Pope, in the meantime, gave them their first task as a Company, the religious instruction of all the school children of Rome.

### **A New Army**

The question now arose of giving permanent form to their work. Each evening they debated the question. Up to this time, the year 1539, the idea of organizing their apostolate had not occurred to them. Lainez says: "When we were in Paris our intention was not to found a Religious Order but to pass in poverty a life dedicated to the neighbor." It was after their apostolate had been favorably received at Rome



that they got the idea of forming themselves into a Religious Order. After much discussion they all agreed that Ignatius should ask for Papal approval to establish an Order called *The Company of Jesus*. Its object was stated in a summary to be presented to his Holiness. It was "chiefly to aid souls in Christian doctrine and Christian living, to spread the word of God by preaching, by spiritual exercises, by deeds of neighborly kindness and especially by the instruction of children and the ignorant in Christianity."

### **Membership in the Army**

The members were to bind themselves by special vow of obedience to the Pope to go anywhere in the world at his command. They were to take the perpetual vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. They were to say the Office in private and not in choir, they were to have no special religious dress, no fixed penitential observance. Each one in his penitential practice would be guided by the direction of his superior and he would conform to the ordinary clerical dress of the country where he happened to be. Pope Paul the Third referred the summary plan to a commission of three cardinals. One of the cardinals was entirely against the idea of a new Order. Ignatius promised two thousand Masses if a favorable decision was given. The cardinal finally gave his consent if the Order was limited to sixty. On the twenty-seventh of September, 1540, the Company of Jesus was founded by a Papal Bull. The Company was allowed to draw up its constitutions according to the outline presented and approved. Within three years the limitation of numbers was removed by Papal decree. Seven months after the founding of the Order the Companions met to draw up constitutions and elect a General. Ignatius Loyola was the unanimous choice. After protest he accepted the office. On the first Friday after Easter, 1541, the Companions made the pilgrimage to the seven churches



of Rome and took their vows. The Company of Jesus was organized.

### **Fields Afar**

One of the first acts of Ignatius as General was to answer the request of King John of Portugal for Jesuit missionaries to the Indies. Two were selected, Simon Rodriquez and Francis Xavier. Rodriquez however remained in Portugal while Xavier went to the Indies. The other Companions were scattered over Europe fighting the spiritual and educational battle of the counter-Reformation. Loyola, their founder and their leader, spent his life in Rome. From his coming there as a pilgrim priest until his death he was absent from the city or its environs only once. From Rome he governed his Order. He instituted a system of correspondence that kept him in constant touch with his forces and maintained their morale. Nothing that concerned the spiritual, mental or physical welfare of his subjects was too small for his interest. His letters cover a wide range of topics from the classic on Obedience to letters dealing with the price of wheat.

### **Jesuit Education or the Apostolate of Education**

The Jesuit Order under Loyola's generalship took up the apostolate of education. Although the idea of a cordon of colleges belongs to Lainez and not to him, the Ignatian stamp was on Jesuit education in the beginning and is there today. For to Ignatius education meant training not only of intellect but of will for life here and hereafter. At the close of his life there were thirty-five Jesuit centers of learning in Europe and nine in India and America. Four years before his death Loyola founded the German College in Rome. Its purpose he explains as a

### **The German College**

work of great Christian charity to bring back Germany to the religion of the Catholic Church. A college to which youths

shall be brought from all parts of that region, including Poland, Bohemia and Hungary, lads of ability endowed with good natural parts and nobles among their people. The idea is that these lads leaving those countries before they are depraved by the vicious habits and heretical opinions prevailing there may be instructed in sound doctrine and virtuous life. And leaving the college as fit workmen for the vineyard of the Lord they may go back to those countries, one with a bishopric, another to take a parish, another as canon of a cathedral. Then they can preach and help by doctrine and example those who speak their language. For there is a great lack of faithful and good workers in Germany and an oversupply of bad and perverted workers.

### **The Spread of the Faith**

While Ignatius visioned schools and colleges as means of winning souls he did not consider them the only means. The apostolate of the Company as he saw it is expressed in the Bull of Pope Julius the Third, issued in July, 1550, ten years after the foundation of the Order.

The Company is founded to employ itself entirely in the defense and spread of the Holy Catholic Faith and to help souls in Christian life and doctrine. This is to be done by preaching, public reading of the Scriptures, teaching the Word of God, by giving *The Spiritual Exercises*, teaching Christian doctrine to children and the ignorant, hearing confessions and administering the sacraments. It is also instituted to appease quarrels, help prisoners in jails and the sick in hospitals, and all must be done gratuitously without expecting any human reward.

### **Education for Life**

To Loyola education meant life and not merely schooling. So he looked on hospitals and jails as fields for the educational apostolate. He valued book learning or he would not have gone to school again at the age of thirty-three. He appreciated intellect so he picked his companions from among the best scholars of the



University of Paris. But book learning and intellect were not enough. He wanted heart and soul. For he was Catholic in the complete sense of the word.

### **A Military Order**

Ignatius Loyola built his Order on military lines. It bore little resemblance to the older Orders; no monastic dress, no choir in common, no penance of rule. Every member was subject to an immediate superior, immediate superiors subject to higher superiors, they in turn and all under them subject to the General. It was very close to the military formation of his own army day, and of every day and every army. Ignatius made obedience the distinguishing mark of the Company. But the obedience he called for was much higher than military obedience. The soldier obeys and may think as he chooses and be a very good soldier.

### **Jesuit Obedience**

Not so the member of the Company. Unless he obeyed with complete loyalty and eagerness, accepting the command as a personal conviction, persuading himself that it was the very best line of action to follow, Loyola did not consider a subject obedient. And it made no difference in the Ignatian ideal who gave the command. The member of the Company must not consider the person commanding but only Him in whose Name the command was issued. It was the office not the person that called for whole-hearted obedience. Superiors in the Company were to hold office for a few years only, the General alone kept his position for life. He was elected but all the others were appointed to office by him. Government was according to regulations and every member of the Company knew his regulations, for he read them each month. His book of regulations and his crucifix were the only personal property he could call his own.



These were given him when he took his first vows, after he had spent two years in the novitiate, the military school for the soldier of Christ.

### **Leader and Commander**

Ignatius Loyola ruling his command was much more than a commander. He was a leader. He did not consider his men as machines or pawns to be shifted about in mechanical fashion. His letters to Francis Xavier and to others on distant missions show the heart of a real friend and not merely the commands of a military martinet. In the last year of Xavier's apostolate in the Indies he wrote to Ignatius in Rome:

My true Father, I received your letter on my way back from Japan, and God knows how consoled I was to get the news I longed for that you were alive and in good health. And among other consoling words I read your closing line, "All yours without ever being able to forget you, Ignatius." These words I read with tears of joy, as I now write with tears, remembering past days and all the love you have ever had for me and still have. And I thought too of how God had saved me from great dangers in Japan due to your prayers. You write of your great desire to see me before you die. God knows how these words grip me. I cannot recall them without tears. The least of your sons but the oldest in exile. Francis.

### **The Spiritual Exercises**

The fineness of feeling expressed by Xavier explains the attitude of all the Companions toward their leader. From the time they got his idea as university students until their lives were spent, they gave unstintingly all he asked of them in the cause they had made their own. The secret of the hold Ignatius had on his followers is not hard to find. It was rooted in *The Spiritual Exercises*. For his own life as well as the lives of his Companions expressed the ideal contained in *The Spiritual Exercises*.

## Two Big Ideas

When Ignatius had come out from the Cave of Manresa he had learned two big ideas, a hatred for sin and great personal love for Christ. Possessed by these two ideas his whole life was spent in deepening them in his own soul and carrying them into the souls of others. He had gone into the Cave of Manresa inexperienced in the real battle of life, which is the fight of the soul against the brute in man. God taught him, as he often said, dealing with him as if he were a little boy at school. It was a hard school and he suffered much. So he wrote down his experiences and from them he drew up a drill book of the soul. As years passed he improved it until it was finally printed, toward the end of his life, under the title, *The Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius Loyola

### A Drill Book

This book of his can only be understood as a drill book. Ignatius was a soldier and he knew how a drill book was used. So when he was recruiting followers he did not hand them his book, but he gave them *The Spiritual Exercises*. For years it was only in manuscript form, and it was a book not to be read but to be lived. This is as true today as when he first put it together. It is a drill to be gone through. He explains his title by saying that as walking or running are called physical exercises, so is spiritual exercise applied to every form of prayer, vocal and mental that prepares the soul to free itself from sin and inordinate attachments. "And after it has freed itself from sin to find the will of God in the details of life for the salvation of one's soul."

### Self-Control a Basic

Ignatius then reasons in the first series of meditations on self-control as the basic need of every life. Sin is lack of self-control. It is against reason and

against God. It is the one supreme evil in life. Because of it Hell was created and the human race inherited its legacy of sorrow and pain. Ignatius begins with a fact statement that man belongs to God, and once that is grasped then the meaning of sin, its evil, its punishment follow in logical order. Ignatius aims at making the retreatant think things through for himself, and by himself, with the spiritual director as a guide and not a preacher. So his first series of meditations deal with basic Catholic truth.

### **The Story of a King**

The second part of his book opens with a story. It is the story of a great crusade and a great leader. The leader calls on all good men to follow him in the war for country and for God. His call to arms reads: "My will is to reduce to subjection all the land of the infidels. So whoever is prepared to come with me must be contented with the rations and equipment that I have. In like manner he must take every risk that I take in the campaign, that he may share in the joys of victory as he has shared in the toils of conflict." What would any real man answer to that appeal, asks Loyola. Then the story is pointed to Christ the Eternal King Whose call is to conquer the souls of men and carry them in triumph to the Kingdom Eternal. He who understands this call must be willing to follow Christ in the battle of life that he may triumph with Him in glory. And Ignatius adds that men of spirit will not only answer the great call but will ask the Leader to place them among the shock troops ambitious for distinguished service. In the battle for God they will not only resist passion but conquer it, fearless in their war against sin.

### **Personal Love for Christ**

This in outline is Loyola's meditation on The Kingdom of Christ, one of the key meditations of *The Spiritual Exercises*. The meditations that follow are



on different events in the *Life of Christ*, each event showing different virtues to be imitated. The Kingdom lays down the general plan of campaign, the following meditations fill in the details. The Kingdom explain the attitude of Ignatius Loyola toward the service of God, for it reveals his dominant motive, personal love for Christ. This was the motive too that first drew his Companions to follow him in a general apostolate for the good of the neighbor, and then to form themselves into a Religious Order. The Company of Jesus was the Kingdom expressed in consecrated lives.

### **Vision and Purpose**

Soldier, priest, founder of the Company of Jesus, Ignatius Loyola was a man of fixed purpose and wide vision. God's grace intensified and supernaturalized purpose and vision. His vision was the world, his purpose the winning of the world for Christ. He governed the Company as General for fifteen years. During that time he suffered much from ill health, often confined to his bed. But he was never known to complain or to ask God for freedom from illness. Yet he was known to be extremely solicitous about the health of his followers. He remarked "that it was a wonderful providence of God which had sent him so much illness that he might be able to feel the sufferings of others." The will of God was his one concern. Let that be done in every circumstance of life, in sickness or health, sorrow or joy, success or failure. This was the great ambition he conceived at Manresa. His life was spent in attaining it.

### **The Growth of an Army**

In the fifteen years that he ruled the Company of Jesus he saw it grow from a small group of Companions to a Religious Order divided into twelve provinces with a thousand members spread over Europe, Asia, and South America. It had met with fa-

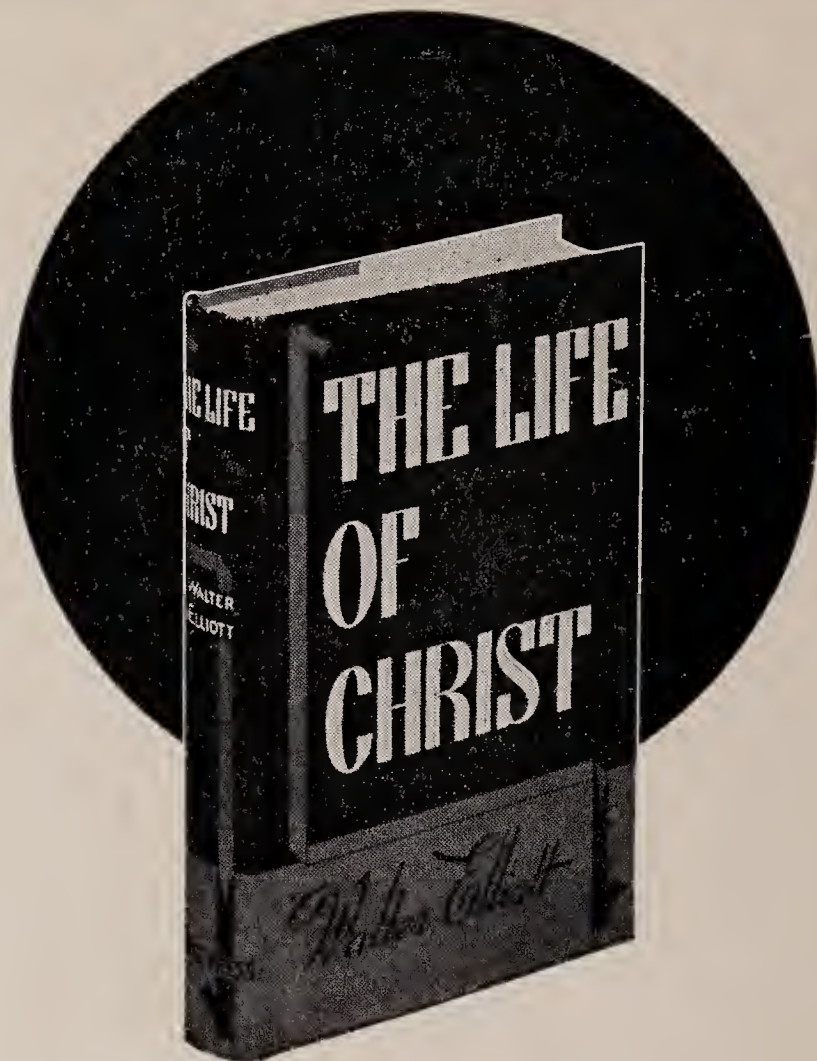
vor and disfavor, friendship and enmity, love and hatred. Everywhere it battled for God and Church, directed by its commander who in other days had led into action the halting hosts at Pamplona. He was in his sixty-sixth year. The shadows of life were lengthening. Between January and July, 1556, he had many periods of illness. Toward the end of July he was sick in bed with what was called the Roman fever. Many others in the house were ill. No one thought the illness of the General serious.

### **The Soldier's Last Battle**

On the last day of July, about eight in the evening, he asked the nurse to leave the room and called Polanco, one of his comrades to his bedside. To him he said: "I know that death is near. Go to the Vatican and humbly beg the blessing of his Holiness upon me and upon Lainez who is seriously sick. If God takes us to heaven, tell His Holiness we will pray for him there as we do here." Polanco answered: "The doctors do not think there is danger in your illness and I hope God will spare you many years for His service here. Do you feel so badly?" Ignatius replied: "I am in such a state that there is nothing left for me except to die." Polanco was very hopeful, and said he thought the next day would be time enough to go to the Pope, for he had many important letters to finish that night. Loyola remarked: "I should like it better today than tomorrow, the sooner the better. I should like it but do what you think best. I leave it freely in your hands." Then the doctor examined him and declared there was no immediate danger. Polanco went back to his letters. As the night wore on Ignatius grew restless, murmuring at times "O God!" The nurse in attendance noticed Loyola become strangely quiet. He rushed out of the room to call a priest. When he came back Ignatius Loyola was dead. It was close to midnight, July 31, 1556.







# THE LIFE OF CHRIST

*By Rev. Walter Elliott, C.S.P.*

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